ODE ON THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD

BLISS CARMAN

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By Bliss Carman

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ON · THE · CORONATION · OF · HIS · MAJESTY
EDWARD · VII · BY · THE · GRACE · OF · GOD
OF · THE · UNITED · KINGDOM · OF · GREAT
BRITAIN · AND · IRELAND · AND · OF · THE
BRITISH · DOMINIONS · BEYOND · THE · SEAS
KING · DEFENDER · OF · THE · FAITH · EM-
PEROR · OF · INDIA · AT · WESTMINSTER · IN
JUNE · IN · THE · YEAR · OF · OUR · LORD · ONE
THOUSAND · NINE · HUNDRED · AND · TWO

Ode on the Coronation of King Edward

1902

THERE are joy-bells over England,
there are flags on London town;
There is bunting on the channel,
where the fleets go up and down;
There are bonfires alight
In the pageant of the night;
There are bands that blare for splendour, and guns
that speak for might;
For another king in England is coming to the
crown.

II.

As it was in Saxon Britain, and through the Norman's sway,
And with the mighty Tudors, so it must be to-day.
For the English kings must hold
From Alfred, great of old,
From Sea-king and Crusader and Elizabeth the Bold,
And every free-born Commoner whose strength is England's stay.

III.

They will take him up to Westminster, and set
him in his place;
And Church and Lords and Commons will stand
before his face,
And hear him make reply,
In the name of God most high,
To be their Faith's Defender, as it was in days
gone by,
With the thousand years behind him and the glory
of his race.

IV.

They will give him orb and sceptre, the chalice, spurs and sword,
And vest him with the purple to kneel before his Lord;
Then he will rise from prayer,
In the ancient Minster there,
And hear the world's four corners proclaim the troth they bear,
And cry, "God save King Edward!" and pledge the liegeman's word.

V.

They will keep the old tradition that fills the world
with fame;
They will hold by use and custom, and repeat the
sounding name;
And men a million strong
Will give him shout and song,
Where the trappings and the banners and the
blazons move along,
When the bells make din by day, and by night the
rockets flame.

VI.

There'll be men of little learning and men of proven worth,
Of every caste and creed, come up from all the earth,
To watch him brave and fine,
To speak of right divine,—
Plantagenet and Lancaster and Stuart in his line,—
And bless the blameless memory of Her who gave him birth.

VII.

But who will stand before him, with simple words and few
And a knowledge of the morrow, and tell him straight and true,
Not only by God's grace
He comes unto his place,
The sovereignty of office, the reverend pride of race,
But by their will who choose him as their fathers used to do?

VIII.

By the touch of love that kindles the blood
beneath the tan;
By the loyalty they bear him because he is a man,
Who has learned the modest way
To serve and to obey,
Who never flinched from duty, nor faltered in fair
play;
For the world is held together by the link of code
and clan.

IX.

Stand up, Sir, in your honour! They come from
near and far,
Rajah and Chief and Councillor and Prince
and Rasseldar,
From Canada and Ind
And the lands behind the wind,
Whose purpose none may question nor their
decree rescind,
To name you King of England for the gentleman
you are.

X.

Premier and Peer and Senator, they come from far and near,
In kilted worn war-harness, in fez and jewelled gear,
In their proud fealty,
The new-world chivalry
From Melbourne and Toronto and the islands of the sea,
To render trust and tribute of all men hold most dear.

XI.

What people are these passing to the sound of pipe
and drum,
In the garments of all nations, and singing as
they come?
By the colour on the cheek,
By the accent when they speak,
They are foreign-born and alien, and their homes
are far to seek;
But they all come up to England, when England
calls them home.

XII.

And these who speak the English tongue not in the English way,
With the careless mien and temper self-assured, whose sons are they?
By the larger, looser stride,
By the ampler ease and pride,
By the quicker catch at laughter and the outlook keener-eyed,
They were bred beneath the tent-cloth of a wider, whiter day.

XIII.

From the rough red tides of Fundy where the ships go far inland,
To Kamloops where the hills are set as at a council grand;
From the waving Northern light
At the edge of polar night,
Where underneath the burnished stars the bitter trail is bright,
To the inland seas that sparkle where goodly orchards stand;

XIV.

By prairie, swale, and barren, by jungle and lagoon,
Where endless palm-trees rustle and the creamy
breakers croon,
By canyon, ford, and pass,
By desert and morass,
In snows like stinging lashes, on seas like burning
glass,
By every land and water beneath the great lone
moon;

XV.

Our fathers died for England at the outposts of the world;
Our mothers toiled for England where the settlers' smoke upcurled;
By packet, steam, and rail,
By portage, trek, and trail,
They bore a thing called honour in hearts that did not quail,
Till the twelve great winds of heaven saw their scarlet sign unfurled.

XVI.

And little did they leave us of fame or land or gold;
Yet they gave us great possessions in a heritage untold;
For they said, "Ye shall be clean,
Nor ever false nor mean,
For God and for your country and the honour of your Queen,
Till ye meet the death that waits you with your plighted faith unsold.

XVII.

"We have fought the long great battle of the liberty of man,
And only asked a goodly death uncraven in the van;
We have journeyed travel-worn
Through envy and through scorn,
But the faith that was within us we have stubbornly upborne,
For we saw the perfect structure behind the rough-hewn plan.

XVIII.

"We have toiled by land and river, we have laboured on the sea;
If our blindness made us blunder, our courage made us free.
We suffered or we throve,
We delved and fought and strove;
But born to the ideals of order, law, and love,
To our birthright we were loyal, and loyal shall ye be!"

XIX.

Oh, East they go and West they go, and never can they bide,
For the longing that is in them, and the whisper at their side;
They may stablish hearth and home,
But the sons will forth and roam,
As their fathers did before them, across the hollow foam,
Till strange lands lift to greet them at the edges of the tide.

XX.

They have visions of a country that sorrow never knew;
They have rumours of a region where the heart has naught to rue;
And never will they rest
Till they reach the fabled West,
That is charted, dim but certain, in the Volume of the Breast.
And forever they are dreamers who make the dream come true.

XXI.

In the North they are far forward, in the South
they have begun,
The English of three continents who take their
rule from none,
But follow on the gleam
Of an ancient, splendid dream,
That has manhood for its fabric, perfection for
its theme,—
With freedom for its morning star, and knowledge
for its sun.

XXII.

And slowly, very slowly, the gorgeous dream grows bright,
Where rise the four Democracies of Anglo-Saxon might:
The Republic, fair, alone;
The Commonwealth, new-grown;
The proud, reserved Dominion, with a story of her own;
And One that shall emerge at length from travail, war, and blight.

XXIII.

Oh, doubt not, wrong, oppression, and violence
and tears,
The ignorance and anguish and folly of the years,
Must pass and leave a mind
More sane, a soul more kind,
As the slow ages shall evolve a loftier mankind,
When over lust and carnage the great white
peace appears.

XXIV.

For surely, very surely, will come the Prince of Peace
To still the shrieking shrapnel and bid the Maxims cease,
Not as invaders come
With gun-wheel and with drum,
But with the tranquil joyance of lovers going home
Through the scented summer twilight, when the spirit has release.

XXV.

By sea and plain and mountain will spread the
larger creed,—
The love that knows no border, the bond that
knows no breed;
For the little word of right
Must grow with truth and might,
Till monster-hearted Mammon and his sycophants
take flight,
And vex the world no longer with rapine and
with greed.

XXVI.

O England, little mother by the sleepless Northern tide,
Having bred so many nations to devotion, trust, and pride,
Very tenderly we turn
With welling hearts that yearn
Still to love you and defend you,—let the sons of men discern
Wherein your right and title, might and majesty, reside.

XXVII.

O Sir, no empty rumour comes up the earth to-day
From the kindred and the peoples and the tribes
a world away;
For they know the Law will hold
And be equal as of old,
With conscience never questioned and justice
never sold,
And beneath the form and letter the spirit will
have play.

XXVIII.

When you hear the princely concourse take up the word and sing,
And the Abbey of our fathers with acclamations ring,
Know well that, true and free,
By the changeless heart's decree,
On all the winds of heaven and the currents of the sea
From the verges of the Empire will come, "God save the King!"

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